

Appl. No. 10/036,090
Amdt. Dated February 27, 2004
Reply to Office Action of December 1, 2003

Attorney Docket No. 81868.0038
Customer No. 26021

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action dated December 1, 2003, claims 1 and 3-9 are canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Claims 21 and 22-29 are pending in the application. It is not the Applicant's intent to surrender any equivalents because of the amendments or arguments made herein. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 4 of the Office Action, claims 21 and 23-29 were allowed.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner and formally recognizes the allowable subject matter of claims 21 and 23-29. Applicants have canceled all other claims previously present in the application, and respectfully submit that claims 21 and 23-29 are now in good order for allowance.

Art-Based Rejections

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 6-9, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagate et al. in view of Matsuo et al.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 3-5 and 23-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagate et al. in view of Matsuo et al. and further in view of Narita et al.

The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections, however, in order to expedite prosecution, has canceled the claims to permit claims 21 and 23-29 to issue. Silence with respect to the arguments and rejections presented in the Office Action is not to be construed as acceptance of the merits of the rejections.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 337-6742 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: February 27, 2004

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